

Group seeks new course for women

The Women in Trades Kootenay Council told Selkirk College board members Tuesday evening more must be done to ensure women have access to non-traditional occupations.

Speaking for group, composed of local women who work in trades, Marcia Braundy said an important step to getting more women in the trades is for the college to offer a pre-trades course for women.

Braundy, the first woman in B.C. to get journeyed status as a carpenter, said the group supported the creation of a women's access program aimed at encouraging women to get into the trades and supporting them while taking courses.

College principal Leo Perra said the college has received \$20,000 from the ministry of education for the operation of the women's access program starting this year. The remaining \$10,000 needed for the program will come from college funds.

Carpenters, plumbers, machinists, electricians, pipefitters and mechanics are considered among those jobs where women have not played a significant role in the past.

The group asked the college to adopt the policies established by the Pacific Vocational Institute regarding accessibility to trades for women.

The policies include ad-

vocating for women, support in principle the objectives of women's organizations such as B.C. Women in Trades Association, upgrading facilities to accommodate an increase in the number of women in training.

Opposition to the concept of a women's pre-trades course at the college came from one of the few women on the board, Marion Beattie, who said the program should be open to both men and women.

Braundy argued women have not had the history in handling tools and industrial work that men have had. She said this conditioning starts when the child is young.

Board member Walter Donald said he agreed with 95 per cent of what was contained in the brief, but asked them if they really think the college should be an advocate for women.

Braundy replied yes.

Sally Mackenzie, an apprentice cabinetmaker told the council a women's access program was necessary to support women who run into sexual harassment in the classroom.

The board moved to accept the brief and to have the administration examine it to see what is already college policy and what is not.

Bob Buckley, board chairman complimented the group for a "one of the better prepared briefs," which the board has received.